



**PORT COLBORNE**

## **Mayor's Report**

February 8, 2022 Council Meeting

### COVID-19 Update

Niagara Region Public Health will be holding a pop-up vaccination in Port Colborne starting tomorrow and running through Friday at the Port Colborne Visitors Centre, 76 Main Street West. It will operate from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. You can go online and book an appointment or just walk in.

There will be an additional vaccination clinic on Sunday, February 13<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. at McKay Public School at the corner of Fielden and Killaly. This is for walk-ins only.

Children 5 and up can get their first or second dose and those 18 and over can get any dose. No health card is required.

Please do your part to keep safe and get your vaccination.

### Family Day

On February 21<sup>st</sup> we will be celebrating Family Day with city hall, our engineering and operations centre, library and museum closed to the public.

At the Vale Health & Wellness Centre we will be hosting a free family skate from 1:30 – 3:30. Proof of vaccination via Ontario's enhanced vaccine certificate with QR coding will be required for access to the building.

We encourage you to get outside and have fun in the snow or just go for a walk. Enjoy the day with your family.

## February is Black History Month

In February we celebrate Black History Month and honour Black Canadians whose struggles and achievements have shaped our country.

The Port Colborne Public Library has put together a great selection of books to honour Black History Month. Feel free to walk by their window display to see what's available.

Place a hold by phone by calling 905-834-6512, emailing [library@portcolborne.ca](mailto:library@portcolborne.ca), or through your online library account.

The Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum has also found early connections to Port Colborne for those seeking freedom in Canada.

They were hidden in plain sight on the ships coming into the guard lock at Port Colborne. Helpers had guided those seeking freedom and escaping their enslaved conditions along the Underground Railroad, directing them to ports like Erie and Sandusky along the American shore of Lake Erie.

Among the owners and captains of the vessels on the lakes were some abolitionists. Determined to help those Black freedom seekers, sometimes the abolitionists hid them onboard, but a less suspicious method was simply to add them to the ship's crew list, using fake names. They could board the ship openly, and just had to act their part as crew members as the ships left American shores heading toward Canada.

Recent research has focused on the schooner, Home, and its abolitionist captain, James Nugent, who assisted many to freedom in Canada. Nugent brought the Home into the Welland Canal on many trips and here in Port Colborne, at the guard lock of the Second Welland Canal, a few got off the ship, finding freedom, while others stayed on board until the ship reached St. Catharines.

Although their lives here were not easy, with racism and prejudice still formidable barriers, they were free.

We hope you take the time to learn about Black History Month.

## Winter conditions

Over the past 3 weeks the Niagara Region has been blanketed with snow and I would like to put a shout out to staff in our Roads, Parks, By-law, Communications and Customer Service departments for stepping up to keep our roads and sidewalks safe and our residents informed.

Winter isn't over yet and we remind you to ensure your cars are not parked on the street during a snow event and that your sidewalks are kept clear.

Please also remember your neighbour who may need some assistance in clearing snow from their pathways and driveways. We know there are many good neighbours out there and we thank you for helping those in need.

This month also brought some extra cold weather which in turn caused several water main breaks throughout the city. Our water department teams worked through some extremely challenging conditions to ensure these breaks were repaired and clean water was flowing. Thank you to these men and women.

## Ontario Marine Strategy

As a part of the provincial governments pre-budget consultations, the City of Port Colborne joined other Ontario cities and towns, and key stakeholder groups including the Chamber of Marine Commerce, in recommending that the province create an Ontario Marine Transportation Strategy and establish an Ontario Marine Secretariat to develop a policy and funding framework.

The Province of Ontario does not have a marine strategy or related funding for cities and towns with ports. Competing for limited federal funds with major city ports including Halifax, Montreal, and Toronto, municipalities like Port Colborne need to maintain port and harbour infrastructure for safety and security; to support recreational and commercial boating traffic; attract investment and tourism; promote waterfront revitalization; and help facilitate marine industrial growth. However, the capital costs to upgrade port and harbour infrastructure is significant, and smaller Ontario communities such as the City of Port Colborne do not have the financial capacity to fund these improvements on their own.

The recommended provincial program should mirror the Quebec government's "Maritime Strategy" created in June 2015, with the goal of "ensuring optimal and responsible use of maritime potential in Quebec". This program, which was established with \$3 billion over five years, provides funding for various initiatives "designed to showcase maritime transportation, tourism, and marine resources".

Having a provincial strategy and capital funding would support marine issues important to the City of Port Colborne including port rehabilitation, flood mitigation and shoreline erosion, waterfront redevelopment and the City's cruise ship initiative, and the economic, tourism, and cultural significance of the city's port as well as the importance of the industrial marine sector. Any marine strategy should also promote more partnerships and integration with rail and road transportation networks as part of a goods movement strategy.

We will await the provincial budget in March.

### [Municipal Modernization Grant](#)

The City of Port Colborne will receive \$267,630 from the province's Municipal Modernization Program to implement several projects that improve service delivery and administrative operations.

City staff submitted eight applications to the third intake and were approved for the following six projects:

- telecommunications system modernization;
- fire and emergency services digitization and records management;
- digitizing public works permit process;
- implementing route patrol software;
- departmental organization review; and
- human resources management and information systems review.

The basis for the city's requests to the province came primarily from the results of a service delivery review completed by KPMG in August 2020. This review looked at existing service levels and opportunities to implement best practices from other high-performing jurisdictions.

The city is committed to modernizing our processes and looking for efficiencies wherever possible. The goal is to make interactions with the city simple, and we can accomplish this by upgrading to technologies that will create value for residents and businesses.

We look forward to seeing the results of these upgrades.

Thank you and stay safe.